

TOP SECRET

7 March 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Staff Meeting Minutes of 7 March 1979

EA/DCI [] explained that the Director and Mr. Carlucci were in conference and may not finish on time to attend the meeting. Mr. McMahon initiated the meeting. []

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McMahon highlighted reports on growing unrest among the Iranian military and the new system for retiring Iranian military officers; Fatah training Turkish religious zealots in Lebanon; []

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McMahon reported that at the recent Arab League Foreign Ministers Conference [] Syrians and Iraqis to persuade the PDRY to cease its efforts in North Yemen. Speculation now exists that the PDRY, left standing alone, will stop its activities in North Yemen for now, but the situation is likely to flare up again later. Word of President Carter's trip to the Middle East hit the conference "like a bombshell," with the Jordanians forecasting a large anti-U.S. reaction in their country. []

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Taylor advised that the HPSCI approved the reserve release for the [] and approval is still pending from OMB. []

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Hetu advised that on 14 March Counter Spy has scheduled a conference at the UN to announce in detail CIA operations in Iran. The next Covert Action bulletin will focus on Africa. []

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Hetu called attention to a recent article by Joe Trento in the Wilmington Journal saying that the Office of Security recently completed an investigation surfacing several "probable KGB plants." []

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Hicks noted that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee report on Saudi oil fields has already been leaked, even though the staff had decided against any public release. Hitz mentioned that Seymour Hersh has already published an article about the study, which had been revised somewhat for the better. []

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Hicks said that yesterday's four-hour session with Congressman Aspin on analysis done on the USSR/China/Vietnam border hostilities went extremely well, but he did not know what Aspin planned to do with the information he obtained. Hitz said that he was not sure but thought Aspin wanted to have some supportive material on the record. He added that while Aspin remained for the entire session, seven other committee members were in and out, suggesting that interest in intelligence briefings is waning to what it used to be several years ago. Later in the meeting Lehman mentioned that Congressman Aspin spent a lot of time linking production with collection.

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Hitz reported that the Director and DDCI can expect a question from House Appropriations Committee Staffer Snodgrass in forthcoming hearings asking whether or not the CIA budget is adequate for verification of a SALT treaty.

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Hitz said that Scott Breckinridge is approaching the end of his task with the House Assassinations Committee. He had an excellent session with Blakey, who said there would be nothing in the committee's final report suggesting a permanent CIA presence in Mexico. Hitz commended Breckinridge for his excellent work during this difficult assignment.

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Hitz noted that on 14 March the Republican members of the HPSCI would be visiting. He also mentioned that his staff has received inquiries from Senators Talmadge and Hanley asking how to answer constituent complaints about Counter Spy.

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Lapham reported that [] employee was arrested by DEA for importing marijuana and jailed with a \$100,000 bail. He noted that the employee entered on duty in January 1978 and the alleged crime took place in November 1978.

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Lapham reported that the judicial decision declaring the mandatory retirement provisions of the Foreign Service unconstitutional has been reversed by the Supreme Court and there will now be no basis for a challenge to the CIARDS system.

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In response to McMahon's question, Lapham said that he had Waller's suggestion regarding [] and would be forwarding it to the Director today. []

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Noting receipt of a request from SSCI Staff Chief Miller for the December 1976 and 1978 follow-up FOCUS reports on Iran, Shackley said he planned to follow previous guidance of providing the 1976 study, since it had been provided to others, and offering to brief Miller on the 1978 study. In response to Lapham's question, Shackley explained the FOCUS program. Later in the meeting, Lapham noted that the SSCI believes that it has an absolute right to Agency documents and this remains an unresolved charter question. He advised Shackley on how to word his response to Miller's request. []

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Shackley noted that the briefing of the SSCI advisory panel on reconnaissance went well and that Admiral Inman also participated. []

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McMahon noted that yesterday's SCC meeting evidenced the most positive support of the Agency he had witnessed in that forum in recent years.

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Abandoned U.S. Spy Post In Iran Keeps Clicking; Iranians Can't Turn It Off

By Dial Torgerson
Los Angeles Times

BESHAR, Iran — On Jan. 31, American technicians abandoned a secret listening post and radar station on a slope above Beshar. But they left their equipment on—and apparently it's still working.

Reporters who went to the site Monday found the complex equipment still humming, pulsing and clicking. Iranians at the post said that they had made no effort to disable it and that it seemed to be working automatically.

"We don't know how to turn it off," Hussein Ahmadian, Iranian logistics supervisor at the base said. "We're just going to let it run until someone in Tehran tells us what to do with it."

European experts have said that the Beshar base is one of seven major outposts built by the United States along Iran's northern frontier to monitor Soviet space launches and listen in on Soviet radio transmissions.

The Beshar facility consists of four major items:

- A command center built into a hilltop.
- A radar antenna inside a 30-foot-high white dome.
- A radio-monitoring device atop a steel tower.
- A relay station for communication with U.S. satellites.

A steel door to the command center was still secured Monday by a combination lock with five blank buttons.

"They never let us watch when they [the Americans] pressed the buttons for the combination," Ahmadian said. "We haven't tried to get in." One Iranian employe was told by an American that the door was booby-trapped.

There is a brass button that apparently rings inside the windowless command center. No one has answered it since Jan. 31, when a convoy of cars took the last Americans working here to Beshar's airport for evacuation.

Outside the wall, a series of big Climatol air conditioners issued a steady sigh. The unmanned equipment within remains climate-controlled.

Above, where the radar dome sits, there is the hum of electronic life. The unit inside apparently is still scanning the skies.

Atop a small steel platform stands another piece of equipment, identified by a plate on its side as a "pedestal model 310," a product of Scientific Atlanta Inc., which the Iranians said was a listening device. It has four 8-foot arms studded with quill-like protrusions. The arms come almost together at the front. It points toward the Caspian Sea and Russia. It hums.

Nearby is a dish-shaped device 15 feet high. It points straight up, and it also hums.

"All this runs on Beshar electricity," Ahmadian said. "But if we turned off the power, there are generators there which would cut in automatically to keep things going."

Ahmadian is bearded, fluent in English and bluntly anti-American—a popular trend in Iran lately.

"Besides," he said, "we don't know who will get the equipment. Maybe Iran will sell it to someone. Maybe we will use it. It might hurt the machinery if we turned off the electricity."

The Beshar base is near the southeast corner of the Caspian Sea about 47 miles from the Soviet border.